

Message Text

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ACTION COME-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9353

INFO AMCONSUL CALI

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UNCLAS BOGOTA 5902

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: BEXP, CO

SUBJ: SPECIALIZED TRADE MISSIONS - INCREASED ADVANCE OFFICER

ACTIVITIES

REF: STATE 140278

1. AFTER CAREFUL EVALUATION OF THE NEW ADVANCE OFFICER PROGRAM, BASED ON OUR EXPERIENCE WITH A SPECIALIZED MISSION LAST MARCH, WE HAVE CONCLUDED THAT THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAM DO NOT JUSTIFY THE ADDITIONAL EXPENSE AND EFFORT. WE PRESUME THAT THE COST OF THE ADVANCE OFFICER'S EXTENDED STAY IN EACH COUNTRY COME FROM THE OVERALL MISSION BUDGET AND WE WOULD PREFER TO SEE A HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF THESE RESOURCES DEVOTED TO SUCH THINGS AS TEMPORARY HIRE SECRETARIES, INTERPRETERS, ETC.

2. UNDER THE NEW PROGRAM, THE ADVANCE OFFICER COMES TOO EARLY TO TAKE AN ACTIVE PART IN DEVELOPING THE SCHEDULE OF BUSINESS APPOINTMENTS, AT LEAST IN COLOMBIA. FOR OPTIMUM RESULTS HERE, MAILINGS SHOULD TAKE PLACE ABOUT THREE WEEKS BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF THE MISSION AND FOLLOW-UP CALLS FOR APPOINTMENTS ARE BEST MADE BEGINNING TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE MISSION ARRIVES, MAKING APPOINTMENTS MORE THAN TWO WEEKS IN ADVANCE LEADS TO A) HIGHER INCIDENCE OF CANCELLATIONS OR NO-SHOWS BY COLOMBIA AND B) GREATER RISK OF THE EMBASSY HAVING TO MAKE EXTENSIVE ADJUSTMENTS TO APPOINTMENT SCHEDULES DUE TO US COMPANIES CANCELLING UNCLASSIFIED

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THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE MISSION (MOST CANCELLATIONS

SEEM TO OCCUR THREE TO FOUR WEEKS BEFORE THE MISSION'S
DEPARTURE FROM THE US).

3. WE BELIEVE THAT THE ADVANCE OFFICER'S ROLE SHOULD
BE LESS ONE OF INVOLVING HIMSELF IN DETAILED PREPARATIONS
FOR THE MISSION'S ARRIVAL AND MORE ONE OF PREPARING
HIMSELF TO BRIEF MISSION MEMBERS ON A) ADMINISTRATIVE
ARRANGEMENTS MADE BY THE EMBASSY AND B) THE POTENTIAL
MARKET FOR THEIR PRODUCTS, BASED ON HIS CONVERSATIONS

WITH EMBASSY OFFICIALS, INDUSTRY LEADERS, AGENTS, ETC.
THE ADVANCE OFFICER SHOULD ALSO BE PREPARED TO BRIEF THE POST
ON ANY SPECIAL MISSION REQUIREMENTS, ALTHOUGH HOPEFULLY
USDOC WILL HAVE PROVIDED THIS INFORMATION BEFOREHAND.
UNDER ALL BUT THE MOST UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES, ADVANCE OFFICERS
SHOULD BE ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH THEIR OBJECTIVE BY SPENDING
NO MORE THAN TWO WORKING DAYS IN EACH COUNTRY.

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